

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/583,653

Reply to Final Office Action of January 26, 2008

**Amendments to the Drawings:**

The sheets of drawings attached in the Appendix include new FIGS. 3 and 4 per the Examiner's request. No new matter has been added.

### **REMARKS**

The Examiner's comments from the Office Action mailed January 26, 2009 have been carefully considered. Claims 1-11, 13-16, and 19-23, 26-37, and 41-43 remain pending in the application. Editorial revisions have been made to the specification, figures, and claims 1, 11, 14, 26, 35-37, and 41-43. Support for these changes can be found throughout the specification and figures. No new matter has been added.

Reexamination and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

### **Objections to the Drawings**

Formal objection has been made to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for omitting the following features: detachable fitting agents; a reservoir with an immersion fluid; insulation displacement contacts; and connecting elements.

In response, Applicants submit new FIGS. 3 and 4 in the attached Appendix to this paper. Support for these new drawings can be found throughout the specification and figures, e.g., in original claims 1, 3, 6, 12, and 13. No new matter has been added.

### **Amendments to the Specification**

Editorial revisions have been made to the specification to refer to new FIGS. 3 and 4 and to add reference numbers per the Examiner's request. A brief description of the figures also has been added. Support for these changes can be found throughout the specification and figures, e.g., on page 2, lines 21-37, page 3, lines 1-2, and in original claims 1, 3, 6, 12, and 13. No new matter has been added.

### **Claim Objections**

Formal objection has been made to the claims 11, 14, 26, and 35. The Examiner requested definition of the term "axis" in these claims. Per the Examiner's request, Applicants have amended claims 11, 14, 26, and 35 to recite an optical axis.

Formal objection also has been made to claims 1 and 26 for use of the terms "or" and "can." The Examiner's comments have been considered and appropriate correction has been

made. Editorial revisions have been made to remove the terms "or" and "can" from claims 1 and 26. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

### **Claim Rejections**

Claims 1-10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Publication No. 2003/0181098 to Kropp et al. (hereinafter "Kropp") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,784,456 to Smith (hereinafter "Smith"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites, in part, a connection module including a base plate including fitting agents; at least one connecting module for optical waveguides, and at least one connecting module for electrical cores. The connecting module for optical waveguides is configured to engage any of the fitting agents of the base plate; and the connecting module for electrical cores is configured to engage any of the fitting agents of the base plate.

None of the cited reference, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a connection module as recited in claim 1. For example, none of the references discloses or suggests a connecting module for optical waveguides that is configured to engage any of the fitting agents of a base plate; and a connecting module for electrical cores that is configured to engage any of the fitting agents of the base plate.

First, Kropp does not disclose a connecting *module* for optical waveguides and a connecting *module* for optical waveguides as recited in claim 1. Rather, Kropp discloses a plug-in connector having two plug-in connecting elements that fit together. Each connecting element in Kropp includes an optical interface and an electrical interface that are configured to mate with the optical interface and an electrical interface of a corresponding connecting element. Second, the electrical interface on one of the connecting elements in Kropp is not configured to engage any fitting agent on the corresponding connecting element. Likewise, the optical interface on the connecting element in Kropp is not configured to engage any fitting agent on the corresponding connecting element. Rather, each connecting element in Kropp must be aligned so the electrical interfaces mate together and the optical interfaces mate together.

Smith does not overcome the shortcomings of Kropp. Smith also does not disclose or suggest a connecting *module* for optical waveguides and a connecting *module* for optical waveguides as recited in claim 1. Furthermore, Smith does not disclose or suggest a connecting

module for electrical cores and a connecting module for optical waveguides that are each configured to engage any of the fitting agents of a base plate.

For at least these reasons, Kropp would not lead a person to the invention of claim 1, even in view of Smith. Claims 2-10 and 13 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 11 and 26-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Kropp in view of Smith and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2004/0035280 to Poisel et al. (hereinafter "Poisel"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 11 depends from claim 1 and is allowable over the combination of Kropp and Smith for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 1. Poisel does not overcome the shortcomings of Kropp and Smith. Poisel also does not disclose or suggest a connecting *module* for optical waveguides and a connecting *module* for optical waveguides as recited in claim 1. Furthermore, Poisel does not disclose or suggest a connecting module for electrical cores and a connecting module for optical waveguides that are each configured to engage any of the fitting agents of a base plate.

For at least these reasons, Kropp would not lead a person to the invention of claim 11, even in view of Smith and Poisel. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 26 recites, in part, a connection module including at least one connecting module for optical waveguides and at least one connecting module for electrical cores arranged on a base plate. The connecting module for optical waveguides is configured to engage any of the fitting agents of the base plate. The connecting module for electrical cores is configured to engage any of the fitting agents of the base plate.

None of the cited reference, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a connection module as recited in claim 26. For example, none of the references discloses or

suggests a connection module including at least one connecting *module* for optical waveguides and at least one connecting *module* for electrical cores arranged on a base plate. Furthermore, none of the references disclose or suggest a connecting module for electrical cores and a connecting module for optical waveguides that are each configured to engage any of the fitting agents of a base plate.

For at least these reasons, Kropp would not lead a person to the invention of claim 26, even in view of Smith and Poisel. Claims 27-34 depend from claim 26 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 14-16, 19-23, 35-37, and 41-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith in view of Poisel. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 14 recites, in part, a connecting module for optical waveguides that includes fitting agents for a base plate that are configured to engage with any fitting agent on the base plate. Accordingly, the connecting module for optical waveguides can be added to the base plate according to a "box-of-bricks" principle.

None of the cited references, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a connecting module as recited in claim 14. For example, none of the cited references discloses or suggests a connecting module for optical waveguides that includes fitting agents for a base plate that are configured to engage with any fitting agent on the base plate.

For at least these reasons, Smith would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claim 14, even in view of Poisel. Claims 15, 16, and 19-23 depend from claim 14 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 35 recites, in part, a connection module including a base plate including fitting agents for receiving a plurality of connecting modules; and a connecting module for optical

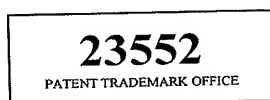
waveguides including fitting agents configured to engage with any of the fitting agents on the base plate.

None of the cited references, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a connection module as recited in claim 35. For example, none of the cited references discloses or suggests a connection module including a base plate including fitting agents for receiving a plurality of connecting modules. Furthermore, none of the cited references discloses or suggests a connecting module for optical waveguides including fitting agents configured to engage with any of the fitting agents on the base plate.

For at least these reasons, Smith would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claim 35, even in view of Poisel. Claims 36, 37, and 41-43 depend from claim 35 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

### Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.



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Respectfully submitted,

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